
Introduced by Senators Hall and Mitchell

January 4, 2016

Senate Resolution No. 54—Relative to Black History Month.

1 WHEREAS, Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, distinguished African
2 American author, editor, publisher, and historian, who is known
3 as the “Father of Black History,” founded Negro History Week in
4 1926, which became Black History Month in 1976, intended to
5 encourage further research and publishing regarding the untold
6 stories of African American heritage; and
7 WHEREAS, The history of African Americans here in the
8 United States, as well as throughout the ages, is indeed unique and
9 vibrant, and it is appropriate to celebrate this history during the
10 month of February 2016, which has been proclaimed as Black
11 History Month; and
12 WHEREAS, There is even greater cause for reverent celebration
13 in 2016 as Americans reflect on the significance of the 150th
14 anniversary of the proposal of the Fourteenth Amendment to the
15 United States Constitution, which granted due process and equal
16 protection under the law to all citizens, and at the same time
17 granted citizenship to African Americans; and
18 WHEREAS, The history of the United States is rich with
19 inspirational stories of great and noble men and women whose
20 actions, words, and achievements have united Americans and
21 contributed to the success and prosperity of the United States; and
22 WHEREAS, The slave trade was a tragic episode in African
23 history and began before August 1619 when the first slaves arrived
24 in Jamestown, Virginia. During the course of the slave trade, an
25 estimated 50 million African men, women, and children were lost
26 to their native continent, though only about 15 million arrived

1 safely to a new home. The others lost their lives on African soil
2 or along the Guinea coast, or finally in the holds of ships during
3 the dreaded Middle Passage across the Atlantic Ocean; and

4 WHEREAS, The first American to shed blood in the revolution
5 that freed America from British rule was Crispus Attucks (March
6 5, 1770, Boston Massacre), an African American seaman and slave.
7 African Americans also fought in various wars, including the
8 Battles of Lexington and Concord in April 1775, the Battle of
9 Rhode Island on August 29, 1778, the battles of Ticonderoga,
10 White Plains, Bennington, Brandywine, Saratoga, Savannah,
11 Yorktown, Bunker Hill, and other revolutionary war battles; the
12 War of 1812, including the Battle of New Orleans; the Civil War;
13 the Spanish-American War; World Wars I and II Korea; and the
14 Vietnam War; and

15 WHEREAS, In spite of the African slave trade, many Africans
16 and African Americans continued to move forward in society;
17 during the Reconstruction period, two African Americans served
18 in the United States Senate, and 14 sat in the House of
19 Representatives; and

20 WHEREAS, From the earliest days of the United States, the
21 course of its history has been greatly influenced by Black heroes
22 and pioneers in many diverse areas, from science, medicine,
23 business, and education, to government, industry, and social
24 leadership; and

25 WHEREAS, Africans and African Americans have also been
26 great inventors, inventing and improving things such as the
27 air-conditioning unit, almanac, automatic gearshift, blood plasma
28 bag, clothes dryer, doorknob, doorstep, electric lamp bulb, elevator,
29 fire escape ladder, fountain pen, gas mask, golf tee, horseshoe,
30 lantern, lawnmower, lawn sprinkler, lock, lubricating cup,
31 refrigerating apparatus, spark plug, stethoscope, telephone
32 transmitter, thermostat control, traffic signal, and typewriter; and

33 WHEREAS, A number of these brave and accomplished
34 individuals, such as Booker T. Washington, George Washington
35 Carver, Matthew Henson, Daniel Hale Williams, Dr. Charles Drew,
36 Jackie Robinson, Jessie Owens, Curt Flood, Medgar Evers, and,
37 of course, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., are noted prominently in
38 the history books of students nationwide, thus enabling them to
39 learn about the important and lasting contributions of these
40 individuals; now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California*, That the Senate
2 takes great pleasure in recognizing February 2016 as Black History
3 Month, urges all citizens to join in celebrating the accomplishments
4 of African Americans during Black History Month, and encourages
5 the people of California to recognize the many talents,
6 achievements, and contributions that African Americans make to
7 their communities; and be it further
8 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
9 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.